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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 004446

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DEPARTMENT FOR EAP, EAP/MLS, ISN

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TAGS: [MNUC](#) [PARM](#) [PGOV](#) [PHSA](#) [PREL](#) [KNNP](#) [KPAO](#) [TH](#)

SUBJECT: PSI: ENCOURAGING THAI ENDORSEMENT

REF: A. STATE 116782

[1](#)B. BANGKOK 2190

Classified By: Political Counselor Susan M. Sutton. Reason 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: MFA American Division Director General Nongnuth Phetcharatana said that Foreign Minister Kantathi would discuss the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) with the Indonesian and Malaysian Foreign Ministers at the ASEAN Regional Forum in Kuala Lumpur. She suggested that Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia be invited to observe PSI activities as a way to encourage joint endorsement. The RTG agrees with PSI in principle, but will not endorse in the near term because of the domestic political situation. The RTG remains concerned that PSI could be connected to the ongoing violence in far southern Thailand. End Summary

THAIS PROMISE TO DISCUSS PSI WITH THE NEIGHBORS

[1](#)2. (C) On July 21, poloffs and visiting OSD Southeast Asia desk officer Jessica Powers met with MFA American Division Director General Nongnuth Phetcharatana and members of her staff to follow-up on Foreign Minister Kantathi's recent commitments on the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) (reftel A). Nongnuth said Kantathi would be briefed on PSI ahead of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) ministerial meeting in Kuala Lumpur and was prepared to discuss the issue with the Malaysian and Indonesian Foreign Ministers. She requested assistance from the U.S. in lobbying the Malaysian and Indonesian governments at the ARF and in the capitals.

"INVITE THAILAND, MALAYSIA, INDONESIA TO OBSERVE PSI"

[1](#)3. (C) Nongnuth requested that the RTG be allowed to attend PSI exercises as an observer. Keeping the RTG directly involved in PSI activities would smooth the decision making process on endorsement and build understanding of PSI within the armed forces. Nongnuth suggested that Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia be invited jointly to observe the next PSI exercise as a way to facilitate a possible joint endorsement.

"WE AGREE WITH PSI IN PRINCIPLE, BUT..."

[1](#)4. (C) Nongnuth repeated FM Kantathi's assurances to Secretary Rice that the RTG agreed with PSI in principle but

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noted that the current caretaker status of the government made endorsement "unlikely anytime soon." Nongnuth said that "off the record," the MFA legal department was preparing the internal documentation needed for PSI endorsement so that the government could move quickly once the political decision was made.

...WE STILL HAVE SOME CONCERNS"

15. (C) Despite these assurances, Nongnuth acknowledged that there were still concerns within the RTG about PSI. Specifically, there is some apprehension over how endorsement would be viewed in far southern Thailand. There is a great deal of sensitivity in the South over rumors of U.S. involvement in the violence. Nongnuth said she was concerned that endorsement of PSI would be manipulated by those looking for evidence of a U.S. connection. The Thai press would also be highly suspicious of endorsement. She suggested a targeted PD campaign directed at specific Thai opinion leaders -- like Kavi Chongkittavorn at the Nation newspaper.

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